

Credit Given to American Troops For Changing Military Situation

Offensive Snatched From
Germans Through Unity of
the Allied Command

May Be Last Drive
Enemy Can Afford

First Considerable Victory of
1918 Brings New Cheer
and Courage

Introductory Comment
By William L. McPherson

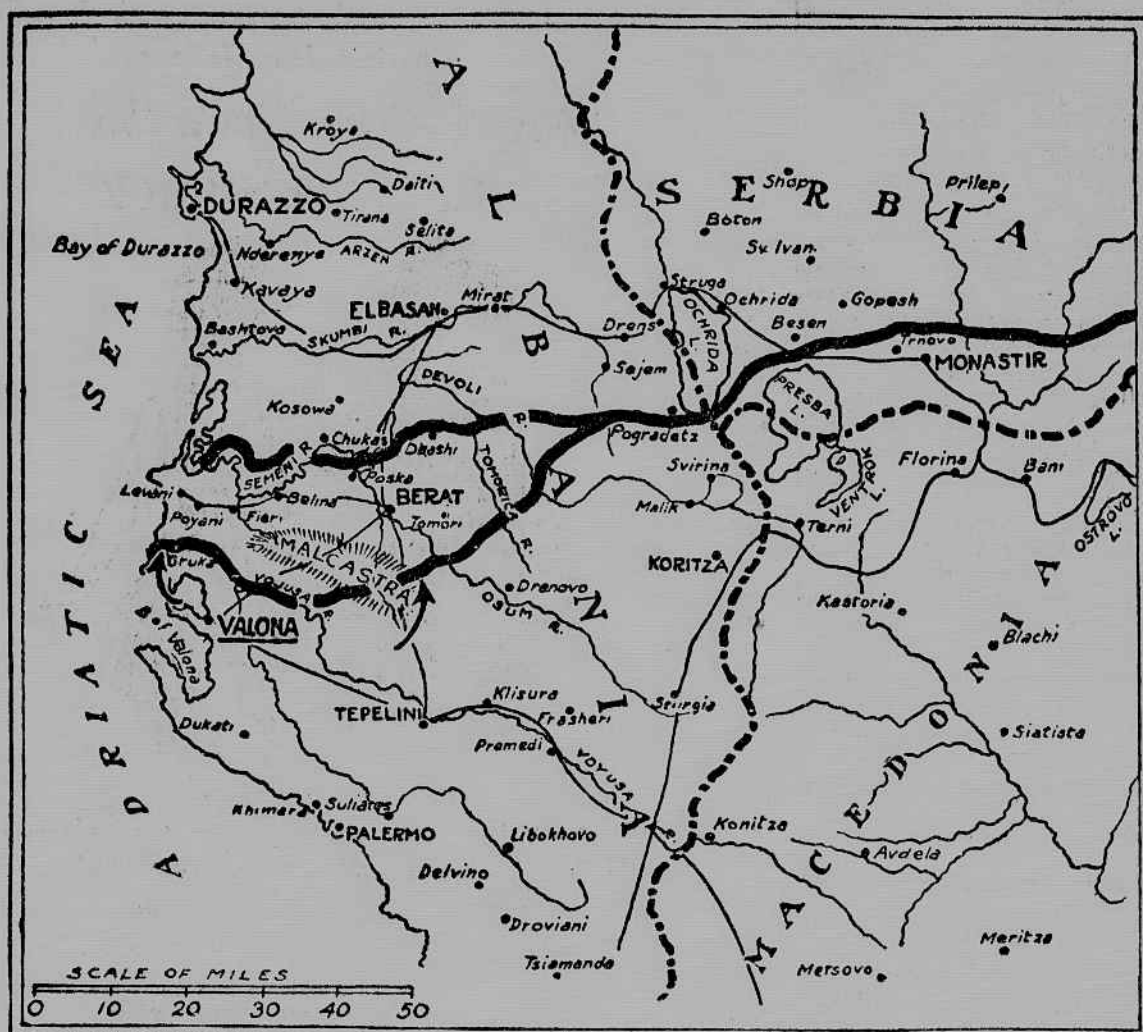
THE campaign on the West front has entered a new phase with General Foch's counter offensive against Ludendorff. It has changed the whole face of the military situation in France. Its results will show decisively in the conduct of the war from to-day on.

What enabled Foch to spring the surprise which killed the fifth German drive and snatched the initiative for the first time since last November out of German hands? There is only one answer. It was the arrival of American reinforcements in numbers sufficient to guarantee the future.

Foch could not have afforded to launch a counter offensive against the German right flank last March, while the first great German drive was running its course toward Montdidier and Amiens. Unity of Allied command had not been achieved at that time. But even if Foch had had supreme control he would have hesitated to undertake an operation which would have dangerously involved his reserves and might, through its failure, have aggravated the disaster to the British before St. Quentin.

He can attack now because since March last the United States has set

HOW ITALIANS SAFEGUARDED VALONA



The heavy lines show the battle fronts in Western Albania before and after the recent Italian advance. The arrows indicate how the Italians drove the Austro-German forces out of the hill position of the Malacra by outflanking it on both sides.

down safely on French soil divisions enough to give him a free hand. Americans have had a conspicuous share in Foch's brilliant counter blow on the Soissons-Chateau Thierry front. And it is the American expeditionary achievement, the surprising character of which is emphasized below, which is the primary cause of this week's sudden change in Allied military policy—a change which has produced the first considerable Allied victory of 1918 and brought new cheer and courage to all the Allied nations.

By Hilaire Belloc

THE Germans' delay in starting the offensive which began on Monday—if indeed this is another serious attempt at the offensive and not merely a feint—has given rise to a vast amount of discussion and speculation, not a line of which is worth writing. The elements of the situation are perfectly clear and ought to be familiar to every one.

The enemy had enjoyed for six months before his great attack on March 21 a very heavy numerical superiority, due to the elimination of the Russian army. It was a superiority far greater than the Allies ever enjoyed on the Western front. He used his unexpected and very great advantage for withdrawing from the front a great number of men and giving them at his leisure

special training for their coming job—a thing the Western Allies were never able to do, because they never had a sufficient margin of men to spare. This advantage came at a time when his heavy artillery had been nearly doubled by the Russian surrender of material and by the consequent Teutonic victory at Caporetto last autumn.

On account of all this, when the enemy attacked in March he obtained a striking success and almost succeeded in restoring the war of movement. The second attack in the north produced a lesser but still considerable success; his third attack a month later broke the line completely between Rheims and Soissons and reached the Marne; the fourth attack, on the Matz, was checked with very heavy loss. The month's delay which followed after the battle of the Matz, when rather more than twenty divisions were engaged without results and with heavy losses, is amply accounted for by the necessity for recruitment.

Time an Ally
Of the Entente

Meanwhile every day that passed or that now passes reduces the numerical superiority upon which alone the enemy had relied. The destruction which his best shock troops have suffered cannot be repaired by mere hospital returns or the drafting in of the young classes—in other words, his chance of success gets less as time passes.

Therefore, the enemy's attack—whether this is it or not—will, if he intends to maintain the offensive, come at the earliest possible opportunity. Whether this is that opportunity or not we do not know, because we are not possessed of the figures on his hospital returns or his casualty lists. We can only guess, and in guessing note that after a heavy action a delay of at least a month has always been imposed upon the enemy when he has been checked.

Of the sector he may choose for his attack—assuming, again, the possibility that the present action is a feint—the general student of the war can in the nature of things know nothing. The enemy prepares material for such a movement in many sectors, and it is demonstrable that he only decides at the last moment upon which one he will concentrate. Proof of this is in the fact that his attack of May 27 was made upon divisions which had only just been sent to rest in a quiet sector of the line, so that the decision to attack that particular line cannot have been taken more than four or five days before the attack was made. The same thing is true, of course, of the local offensives undertaken everywhere along the line by the Allied supreme command. The German never knows where the next one will develop. Discussion of that point therefore is futile at this stage.

Politics Will Play
Important Part

There remains a third point in regard to German plans, which is the question whether the enemy will choose finally to renew his offensive with full force or to stand on the defensive. Every military argument is in favor of his renewing the offensive unless he believes that for the next fighting season he can re-

cruit a large number of Slav troops in the East, for the growth of the American contingents would otherwise reduce him to a position of increasing inferiority. If he does not renew the offensive and does stand on the defensive for the remainder of this season he will do so upon a political calculation—first, as to the attitude of the Slavs in the Eastern territory he has overrun; second, as to the attitude of his own people, who may not be prepared for a continuation of the very heavy losses recently suffered, and, third, from a calculation that the continuation of the war by maintaining a strong defensive unbroken will give him better terms than an offensive which might fail with disastrous results.

Such are the alternatives, and more than that we cannot say. Of the local actions, of which alone we have any recent news, by far the most important was the Italian advance in Albania, supported on the flank by French troops. This operation has not been sufficiently carefully followed in the West, on account of the unfamiliarity of the ground and because of the fact that its whole importance is local. But it is well worth examining, for it may have a considerable effect on a future campaign in the Balkans.

If you look at a map of the Adriatic you will see that there is no harbor for modern shipping on the Italian shore, save at Venice on the north and Brindisi on the south, of sufficient size to serve as a base for a whole modern fleet. This condition has greatly crippled the Italian naval work, and the possession by the Austrians of very different natural harbors has given them a marked advantage in certain phases of this war. They have both Trieste and Fiume at the northern end of the Adriatic, and then a major series of deep landlocked channels between the Dalmatian Islands and the coast, ending with the superb inlet of Cattaro, which is completely secure in its defence against any attack from the sea.

Submarine Realigns
Naval Values

Now, from Cattaro southward there is no harbor serviceable for a modern fleet until you get to the singular geographical accident called the Bay of Valona. The bay is larger than any other inlet on the whole Adriatic. It is deep, almost completely landlocked, with high ground on either side and the town of Valona at its southern extremity. It stands just opposite Brindisi, commanding the Straits of Otranto. Before the advent of the submarine any one holding Valona Bay and Brindisi at the same time would have been master of the Adriatic; he possessed a sufficient fleet, for the straits are not more than fifty miles across and nothing could have passed. On that very account none of the great powers dared to occupy Valona, which until the Balkan war was in Turkish territory, for fear of provoking a war.

When Italy entered this war, however, by agreement with her allies she at once occupied the bay and town. The use of the submarine, of course, taken away some thing of its value, but it still remains the most important point, so far as the mere geographical configuration goes, on the whole Adriatic coast, and it can be made into a most formidable naval base. The

enemy's victories in the Balkan peninsula put him in a position to threaten Valona very seriously. Immediately to the north of the bay, over flat country, the River Vojussa falls into the sea. Behind it is the mountain ridge called the Malacra, which dominates the valley of the Vojussa, and behind the Malacra again is the considerable town of Berat, which makes as good a base as these rough mountains afford for enemy operations on this front. The enemy held not only the line of the Vojussa, but the Malacra behind it, which is the really strong obstacle of all that district.

When the Italians
Occupied Berat

What the Italians did beginning on the morning of July 6 and continuing for four days was this. They advanced their left flank, the western end of the line, along the level sea plain, aided by the fire of British monitors over the coast. They forced the lower reaches and the mouth of the Vojussa River and then threw cavalry forward very rapidly to the north, turning at this end of the Malacra ridge. They were right behind the mountain by Sunday night.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the ridge, which is rather more than twenty miles long, they fought their way up the Berat road, and this right or eastern wing kept so well to the timetable that it got around the eastern end of the Malacra range at just the same time that the left wing got around the western end. The whole of the enemy's main position was therefore turned within forty-eight hours and he was compelled to fall back. He appears to have made some stand on the line of Berat-Kiriri, which is parallel to and just north of the mountain range which he had lost, and in the tangled mountain country to the east, all the way up to Lake Ochrida the French were exercising considerable pressure. On Monday it was clear the enemy could no longer hold the Berat line and he fell back still further to the northward; the Italians occupied Berat, and at the end of the fourth day had completely liberated Valona from all menace.

The enemy's line now stands almost due east and west from the middle of the western shore of Lake Ochrida, and its nearest point is a good forty miles from Valona Bay. Whether the operation is preliminary to a further movement we do not know, but even regarded by itself it has had the effect of rendering secure for the first time in two years the precarious hold of our allies upon their main Adriatic harbor.

Only one other operation of importance is indicated in recent dispatches—the minor but interesting one on July 10 which recovered all the crest of the ridge above the Avre up to and over which the enemy advanced in his great attack on April 4. The Germans were checked, it will be remembered, in their effort to reach the Amiens Paris railway, and the French remained on the summit of the ridge above the Avre, which covers this railway by a few miles. They lost the edge of the high ground and therefore the observation posts that it afforded over the enemy's positions.

This attack of July 10, though yielding only 500 prisoners, was especially valuable in regaining these observation posts. Sending Troops
To Murman Coast

Of the policy now made public by the Allied governments of sending troops to the northern Russian coast we know and can say very little beyond what the bare dispatches tell us. But it is obvious that such moves may be intended to secure the only ice-free port that Russia possesses there on the extreme edge of Finland, a port united with Petrograd by a single line of railway, which was rapidly built during the war. If the enemy, using his alliance with the Finns, had occupied this point he could have made it a submarine base, usable all the year round, and it is, in the first place, to prevent this that the occupation of the port has been under taken.

So long as the harbor is held the enemy will gain no benefit, even were he to reach and cut the railway uniting the Murman coast with the capital, a move which was undoubtedly his intention a couple of weeks ago. His only real advantage would be found in an operation against the coast itself.

It should be noted that before the Allies sent troops here the local population had already risen against the anarchist committee which was governing this place, had defeated its forces and restored something like order. There is a tendency to such a reaction against the Bolsheviks all over Russia at this moment, and among other effects of that tendency, it would seem, although the accounts are still confused, that at most the whole Siberian railway, even as far as Samara, is now held either by the new armed forces of released Czech prisoners or by other opponents of the Bolsheviks, with the possible exception of the loop around Lake Baikal.

If that hold upon the great artery of Siberia can be maintained it will make a vast difference in any plans for international support of the nationalist forces of Russia,

which for nearly a year now have been struggling against their anarchist masters. The enemy has only forty-five divisions on the whole of this Eastern front, and these are his worst troops. This is little more in mere numbers than one-eighth of his total forces, and less than a tenth of his fighting value in men, and not a fifth of his artillery fire power. All the remainder he has concentrated between the Adriatic and the North Sea.

If it should prove possible to support the national movement in Russia, to provide arms and gather any considerable force, forty-five German divisions would be quite insufficient to their task, and we should see Prussia and her allies reduced to the dilemma of weakening their forces in the West just when American recruitments are making it necessary to send there every man possible or of abandoning the control of those eastern regions upon which the Central Empires are depending certainly for supplies and possibly for men next year.

Italians Fighting
Fiercely at Rheims

(Special Tribune)
WASHINGTON, July 20.—A dispatch to the Italian Embassy to-day says: "Italian correspondence from the French front gives details regarding the magnificent resistance of our troops defending Rheims, commanded by General Morone. The brigade commanded by Peppino Garibaldi has particularly distinguished itself. Last Wednesday the Germans occupied vital positions held by our troops, but were promptly expelled in furious counter attacks."

"Romeo Gallenga, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, returning from Paris, said concerning his impressions of the French front:

"The American soldiers fight like veterans. The French press is enthusiastic over the bravery and fighting ability of the Italian troops, whose unceasing resistance has prevented the enemy from gaining ground in the sectors defended by them."

British Air Raiders
Destroy Zeppelins
At Tonderen Base

Two Flights Made by Air-
men Guarded by Ships of
the Grand Fleet

LONDON, July 20.—German airship sheds at Tonderen, in Schleswig-Holstein, were bombed recently by three British airmen and two Zeppelins were destroyed, according to an eyewitness account of the raid printed in the newspaper "Stifts Tidende," of Ribe, Denmark. The four hits obtained by the airmen started a fire which lasted half an hour, during which the Zeppelins were burned.

The statement read: "A detachment of the Grand Fleet, operating off the Jutland coast on the morning of Friday, July 19, has returned to the base, having carried out a bombing attack on the Zeppelin sheds at Tonderen, Schleswig, by the Royal Air Force."

"In the first flight, which was made in the early morning, all the machines reached their objective and made direct hits on a large double shed, which was completely destroyed, the conflagration rising to 1,000 feet."

"A second flight followed, all our machines but one reaching their objective. A large shed was observed to have a hole of considerable dimensions in the roof, from which a volume of smoke was being emitted. A second shed was bombed and direct hits were made, but owing to the fierce anti-aircraft fire and to the smoke of the first shed it was not possible to observe whether the destruction of the second shed was complete. The attacks were made from a height of 700 to 1,000 feet. Four of our machines failed to return and information has been received that three of these machines landed in Danish territory. All the ships returned without casualties."

British seaplanes launched from naval vessels near the coast of Germany have dropped bombs on Teuton airship sheds at Tonderen, destroying two sheds and possibly a third building, the British Admiralty announced to-night.

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val vessels near the coast of Germany have dropped bombs on Teuton airship sheds at Tonderen, destroying two sheds and possibly a third building, the British Admiralty announced to-night.

Four machines of the British aerial squadron did not return, three landing in Danish territory. All the British warships returned to their base without any casualties. In the first flight, which was made in the early morning, all the machines reached their objectives and made direct hits on a large double shed, which was completely destroyed, the conflagration rising 1,000 feet. In the second flight all the machines but one reached their objectives. Bombs were dropped on two large sheds, one having a large hole blown in it. It was impossible to observe whether the destruction of the second shed was complete. The attacks were made from a height of 700 to 1,000 feet. Referring to the British raid on the airships a Berlin official statement under Friday's date says: "Only some material damage was done by this morning's aerial attack upon airship establishments in Tonderen."

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